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## FREDERICK POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

**Section 3:** General Patrol Procedures  
**Topic:** BODY WORN CAMERA (BWC)  
**Approved:** 07/23/2020  
**Review:** Annually in August by the Technology and Services Division Commander.  
**Supersedes:** GO 385 dated 05/13/19

**Order Number:** 385  
**Issued by:** Chief of Police

### .01 PURPOSE:

To address the acquisition, operation, and control of the Department's Body Worn Camera (BWC) Program.

### .02 CROSS-REF:

G.O. [720](#), "Deadly Force Guidelines and Investigations"  
G.O. [1650](#), "Standards of Employee Conduct"  
G.O. [1655](#), "Police Officer Conduct"  
G.O. [833](#), "Evidence and Property Control"  
SOP [RS-085](#), "Property Evidence Disposal Guidelines"

### .03 DISCUSSION:

The Body Worn Camera provides an independent witness to incidents and the interactions of officers with the public. It is important to remember that the recording is the perspective of the camera and not that of the officer or other witnesses.

The Frederick Police Department has adopted the use of Body Worn Cameras:

1. To enhance officer safety during citizen contacts;
2. To record vehicle and/or investigative stops within the physical limitations imposed by the equipment;
3. To record citizen contacts and interactions when no expectation of privacy is present;
4. To enable an officer, whenever practical and possible, to record the commission of a violation or crime;
5. To enhance an officer's ability to report the circumstances leading to an incident in a factual, graphic manner;
6. To provide a supplement to personal testimony in court;
7. To enable the Department to review the performance of its personnel during incidents to include a review of:
  - A. Legal basis used to conduct a stop if captured on video;
  - B. Officer/citizen - violator interaction;
  - C. Arrest procedures, if applicable; and,
  - D. Adherence to established procedures and officer safety training.

#### .04 POLICY:

It is the policy of the Frederick Police Department that personnel equipped with a functional BWC will utilize the equipment for the purpose of collecting evidence that will be used in the prosecution of those who violate the law, and to enhance officer safety. In this policy the Department provides guidelines for the use of BWC equipment and the retention and disposition of recordings. The equipment can be used for any lawful police purposes, such as investigations, traffic stops, field inquiries, interviews, and pursuits. The Department also authorizes its personnel to video record, at their discretion, any other incident which occurs in a public place that would be beneficial to the public interest. The use of BWC is for official law enforcement purposes only. Only departmental equipment will be used for BWC. Violations of the content of this order may result in discipline.

#### .05 DEFINITIONS:

PRIVATE CONVERSATION- A conversation in which at least one of the parties to the conversation has a reasonable expectation of privacy.

#### .10 STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

1. While the use of digital video recorders to record events which occur in public places is not regulated by law, the recording of any conversation which takes place during the video taping of an event is covered by Maryland's "Wiretapping and Electronics Surveillance" law.
2. As a matter of law, a conversation between a law enforcement officer performing his or her duties and a member of the public is protected under the Act where the circumstance does not fall within a statutory exception to the prohibition against intercepting the conversation and when a party to the conversation has a reasonable expectation of privacy in the communication.
3. It is lawful under Section 10-402 (c) (11) this subtitle for a law enforcement officer in the course of the officer's regular duty to intercept an oral communication with a body-worn digital recording device or an electronic control device capable of recording video and oral communications if:
  - A. The law enforcement officer is in uniform or prominently displaying the officer's badge or other insignia;
  - B. The law enforcement officer is making reasonable efforts to conform to standards in accordance with § 3-511 of the Public Safety Article for the use of body-worn digital recording devices or electronic control devices capable of recording video and oral communications;
  - C. The law enforcement officer is a party to the oral communication;
  - D. Law enforcement notifies, as soon as is practicable, the individual that the individual is being recorded, unless it is unsafe, impractical, or impossible to do so; and
  - E. The oral interception is being made as part of a videotape or digital recording.
4. The Annotated Code of Maryland, "Courts and Judicial Proceedings," Section 10-402(c)(4) provides a statutory exception from the general prohibition to record oral communication as follows:

*It is lawful under this subtitle for a law enforcement officer in the course of the officer's regular duty to intercept an oral communication, if:*

*(i) The law enforcement officer initially detained a vehicle for a traffic violation;*



- (ii) The law enforcement officer is a party to the oral communication;*
- (iii) The law enforcement officer has been identified as a law enforcement officer to the other parties to the oral communication prior to any interception;*
- (iv) The law enforcement officer informs all other parties to the communication of the interception at the beginning of the communication; and*
- (v) The oral interception is being made as part of a video tape recording.*

5. Section 10-402(c)(2) also provides exceptions to the interception of oral communications outside the parameters of a vehicle stop. Because BWC is equipped with audio recording capabilities, the pertinent parts of Section 10-402(c)(2) which list the circumstances/conditions under which an audio recording can be made are listed in this order:

*It is lawful under this subtitle for an investigative or law enforcement officer acting in a criminal investigation. . . . to intercept a wire, oral or electronic communication in order to provide evidence of the commission of the offenses of:*

- i) murder,*
- ii) kidnapping,*
- iii) rape,*
- iv) a sexual offense in the first or second degree,*
- v) child abuse,*
- vi) child pornography as defined in the Criminal Law Article Section 11-207 of the Code,*
- vii) gambling,*
- viii) robbery,*
- ix) any felony punishable under the "Arson and Burning" subtitle of Article 6 of the Criminal Law Article.,*
- x) bribery,*
- xi) extortion,*
- xii) or dealing in controlled dangerous substances including violations of Title 5 of the Criminal Law Article.,*
- xiii) fraudulent insurance acts as defined in Title 1, Subtitle 2 of the Insurance Article,*
- xiv) offenses relating to destructive devices under Section 4-501 of the Criminal Law Article, or*
- xv) any conspiracy or solicitation to commit any of these offenses, or*
- xvi) where any person has created a barricade situation and probable cause exists for the investigative or law enforcement officer to believe a hostage or hostages may be involved.*
- xvii) where the person is a party to the communication or one of the parties to the communication has given prior consent to the interception.*

6. A law enforcement officer may intercept "a conversation concerning an emergency," Section 10-402(c)(5).
7. In all cases the interception of the conversation is authorized with the consent of the individual Section 10-402(c)(3).

NOTE: Nothing in this Order precludes an officer from VIDEO RECORDING any incident, encounter, contact or activity that occurs in a public place using BWC without using the audio option.

**.15 PROCUREMENT OF BWC AND TRAINING:**

1. The Commander, Technology and Services Division in consultation with Patrol Commanders will be responsible for procuring and purchasing BWC equipment. No other video/audio equipment shall be used in place of or in conjunction with BWC equipment without the prior knowledge and approval of the Commander, Technology and Services Division.
2. Personnel issued BWC will receive training on this policy, operation of the camera and its capabilities and alternate methods to notify persons of recordings with special needs or limited English capabilities prior to use.
3. Supervisors will receive training on this policy and evidence.com use.

**.20 PRE-USE INSPECTION AND SET-UP:**

At the beginning of each shift an officer equipped with a BWC will:

1. Determine if BWC is functioning as designed. Any problem with BWC is to be brought to the immediate attention of the on-duty supervisor as soon as it is discovered prior to or during the shift;
2. Ensure that the video camera is positioned and adjusted to record all events occurring in the officer's vision area as limited by the range of the camera lens;
3. The Axon View app should be used on a smart phone to view the cameras perspective when mounted on the officer. Officers should use their agency issued smart phones for this purpose.
4. In the event a body worn camera is found to be inoperable or malfunctioning, the Officer will initiate a help desk repair request and remove the camera from service.
5. The TSD Commander will ensure the camera is repaired or replaced and issue a temporary camera if available.

**.25 OPERATION OF BWC:**

1. Video Camera Activation: BWC will be activated during lawful citizen contacts and investigations. Officers will activate their BWC prior to the citizen contact or while en route to the incident. Some circumstances may occur unexpectedly. In those situations officers will activate their BWC as soon as practical. Whenever a BWC is deactivated during a contact, the reason for the deactivation will be audio recorded on the camera immediately prior to turning off BWC. For example; "I am stopping the recording due to no evidentiary purpose."
2. The Frederick Police Department has set a pre-defined buffering time of 30 seconds on each BWC in operation. This buffer time allows 30 seconds of video recording prior to the activation of the BWC. The purpose of this buffering time is to capture the lead up to incidents officers are involved in prior to activation. Officers will not circumvent this buffer cycle in any manner to include power cycling the BWC. Audio is not captured during the 30 second buffer.
3. When utilizing BWC during a citizen contact all personnel will:
  - A. As soon as practicable, prior to any conversation with any individuals involved in an incident or stop, inform the parties that they are being both audio and video recorded (CJP Section 10-402(c)(2)(iii and iv);

**NOTE:** The Department teaches the following greeting as an officer's initial salutation:



*I'm Officer \_\_\_\_\_ of the Frederick Police Department. For your safety as well as my own this encounter is being video and audio recorded.*

- B. Conduct the activity as appropriate and not deactivate the camera until the contact is complete.
  - C. When a person is reporting a crime, providing information regarding a crime or ongoing police investigation, or claiming to be the victim of a crime and indicates they are uncomfortable being recorded:
    - (1) The officer may offer the person with the option to have the sound or camera turned off. A request to turn off the Body Worn Camera should be recorded on the camera prior to turning it off,
    - (2) If the person is being belligerent and uncooperative the officer may consider continuing the recording until the person is calm and cooperative or contact a supervisor for guidance.
  - D. Officers may manually deactivate BWC at the scene of an accident or under other circumstances in which no enforcement action is intended and where the officer believes that video/audio recording serves no useful purpose. If BWC is deactivated under these circumstances the officer will record his reasons for deactivating BWC on the camera audio.
4. Officers will not surreptitiously or openly record private conversations or conversations that are not part of official business or investigations CJP Section 10-401(13)(i). This includes but is not limited to:
- A. Conversations between individuals not including the officer;
  - B. Administrative or general discussions with other employees or supervisors;
  - C. Personal activities;
  - D. Privileged conversations (spouses, lawyers, FOP representative or supervisor); and,
  - E. When handling an incident which requires activation of the BWC and an exception listed above is present, the officer may use the mute function to prevent recording administrative or private conversations and record on camera the reason prior to muting the sound.
5. Officers shall not activate the BWC in places where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists, such as hospital rooms, locker rooms, dressing rooms or restrooms. If an exigency exists, such as an assault in progress, in one of these locations an officer may use their discretion to activate their BWC if the activation is in the best interest of the officer, agency and community. At no time will officers utilize body worn cameras to record an authorized strip search.
6. Officers will not tamper with, modify, or delete recordings. If a prohibited activity has been recorded in error the officer will contact his supervisor. The supervisor will ensure the video is tagged and notify the TSD Commander to have the video deleted after confirming the video was recorded in error.

**.30 BWC EVIDENCE AND RETENTION PROCEDURES:**

1. The agency has enabled auto-tagging between CAD and Evidence.com. The purpose of

auto-tagging is to help identify videos by case number in the situation they were not previously tagged by a user. Auto-tagging does not replace the need of a BWC user to follow the steps noted below in .30, 2-3.

2. A BWC user must tag, categorize, and title all videos considered evidentiary, part of an arrest or intention to place charges, use of force, officer injury, or any other situation in the best interest of the officer, agency, and community. This saves the recording according to pre-defined retention guidelines.
3. In the event that an officer must save a recording as noted in .30 #2, the recording officer will complete the following:
  - A. Document the existence of the recording as evidence in the report or arrest documentation of the incident and note the timestamps in the report of critical points in the video.
  - B. The Officer will tag, categorize, and title the video by using Axon View or Evidence Sync prior to docking the camera for download. The recommendation of the agency is for users to tag videos on a continual basis through Axon View on their department issued smart phones.
    - (1) The video ID will be changed to the CR number in this format: complete year and 6-digit number. (2016-000000) This field is verified in the field and users must enter the correct numbering scheme in order to complete tagging.
    - (2) Select the appropriate retention category from the drop down menu. **Setting the retention category prevents the recording from automatic deletion after 90 days.**
      - a. Evidence: Used by officer to mark videos that are part of any investigation requiring a report or arrestable traffic stops.
      - b. Officer injury: Used by supervisors when creating a video clip for use in an officer illness/ injury report.
      - c. Pending Review: Used by officers or supervisors for a video saved for administrative purposes.
      - d. Potential Complaint: Used by officers or supervisors to save a video that may result in a complaint or when a complaint is made.
      - e. Training Demo: Used by supervisors of officers to save a video created for or to be used for training or evaluation of performance.
      - f. Traffic Stops: Used by officers for non-arrestable traffic stops that may be used in court. (Evidence will be used for arrestable traffic stops)
      - g. Use of Force: Used by supervisors only when creating a clip for use in an administrative Use of Force evaluation and review.
    - (3) Rename the Title to the incident classification and note if it is an arrest.





4. The recording of the arrest of an individual(s) using a Body Worn Camera is subject to the same "rules of discovery" by the defense as any other physical evidence. All discovery of evidence will be handled by the States Attorney's Office.
5. The State's Attorney Office will be provided access to the recordings that have been tagged as evidence directly through Evidence.com.
6. Officers should tag potential complaints or other incidents that may require supervisory review.
7. Major investigations that are re-assigned from the original reporting officer will require a second check for evidence to be stored in the evidence.com system. This responsibility falls on the newly assigned case investigator.

#### **.35 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Supervisors will ensure officers under their command equipped with a BWC are using the equipment in accordance with this policy by conducting monthly quality assurance checks in evidence.com and monthly inspections.
2. Supervisors will review the evidence.com system to ensure all videos documented in police reports are properly categorized, titled, and tagged by the officer.
3. Supervisors will proactively review major incidents including but not limited to violent crime, domestic assaults, felony crimes, and/or incidents likely to gain public notoriety to ensure officers equipped with a BWC under their command have uploaded the video, documented the upload in a police report, categorized the video, titled the video, and tagged said video.
4. Supervisors are encouraged to use the BWC as a method to provide feedback, guidance, and coaching to officers in lieu of physically being on scene and observing the officer's performance.

#### **.40 BWC ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. The Technology Specialist assigned as the Body Worn Camera Administrator will be the custodian of records for all Body Worn Camera evidence.
2. Once a month, the BWC Administrator will conduct a check of the Evidence.com software for proper functioning. This check will be audited within the Evidence.com program for documentation purposes. This check will consist of a review of five (5) video files to ensure:
  - A. proper and timely uploading;
  - B. acceptable audio and video quality; and
  - C. automatic deletion of files over ninety (90) days old.
3. The BWC Administrator will be responsible for the daily review of all videos categorized as Evidence. The BWC Administrator will share these videos with the SAO through the creation of a case in Evidence.com.

4. The BWC Administrator will handle all requests for evidence from the SAO by email when received. These requests will be handled in the same manner as cases created in Evidence.com.
5. The BWC Administrator will be responsible for the training of all personnel in BWC use.
6. The BWC Administrator will update the BWC user list and provide updates to the SAO any time body worn camera users are changed.
7. Annual BWC reporting will be completed by the BWC Administrator as requested by the TSD Commander.
8. The BWC Administrator is exempt from the requirements set forth in this order for notating the reason for accessing a BWC recording in Evidence.com. This is due to the sheer amount of daily access by the BWC Coordinator. The BWC Coordinator actions in the Evidence.com system will be audited by the internal Evidence.com audit structure. The TSD Commander and IT Officer will occasionally assist the BWC Administrator with account administration and/or daily work. In those cases the TSD Commander/IT Officer are also exempt from the requirements for notating the reason for accessing a BWC recording in Evidence.com.

**.42 REPRODUCTION OF BWC DIGITAL RECORDINGS:**

1. All BWC digital recordings are the property of the Frederick Police Department and are subject to all rules which govern the use and disposal of any departmental property. In addition, BWC records are official departmental records subject to the same restrictions placed on other official records/reports.
2. No copies or reproductions of recordings, pictures, audio, or any media recorded on a BWC can be produced by any method without the express permission of the Chief of Police.
3. In the event any departmental member requires a copy of a digital recording for any official law enforcement related reason other than as evidence in a traffic or criminal proceeding, such as for training purposes or performance evaluation, administrative investigations; they shall request a copy in writing via official channels through the Chain of command to the Technology and Services Division Commander. The request will state the specific incident to be copied and the specific reason for the copy of the digital recording.
4. The routing of requests by non-departmental persons shall be in accordance with the type of request. For police records requests the request shall go through the Records Section as would any other request for copies of records. All PIA requests will be logged according to agency policy and forwarded to the BWC Administrator. Discovery requests by subpoena duces tecum will be provided to the agencies court liaison and forwarded via PowerDMS to the BWC Administrator.
5. The BWC Administrator shall be responsible for reviewing all of the above-mentioned requests and providing the requested recording or a reason for denial to the requestor.
6. Because BWC digital recordings are official departmental records/documents, they are regulated by the same restrictions placed on other official law enforcement reports or records. Copies of BWC digital recordings shall only be released upon written authorization from the Chief of Police. The BWC Administrator, or his designee, shall be responsible for duplicating and distributing any copy of a BWC digital recording and shall handle all requests as outlined in this Order.



7. All fees associated with the distribution of BWC recordings are set by the Mayor and Board of Alderman.

#### **.45 REVIEW OF BWC DIGITAL RECORDINGS:**

1. Authorization to view any BWC digital recording by any individual outside the Department shall only be granted by the Chief of Police except as officially ordered by the Court. Prosecutors and/or other official representatives of the criminal justice system who are acting in their official capacity may view BWC digital recordings. Each time a video is reviewed a permanent record is made in Evidence.Com of who and when the video was accessed.
2. Requests from the public to view or to obtain a copy of any BWC digital recording shall be handled in accordance with requests for public information. When deemed necessary and prior to the showing or distribution of a BWC digital recording, the Legal Advisor will review the request for public information and advise the Chief of Police as to its validity. In the event a vehicle stop or other incident recorded on BWC is to be released to the public, the officer(s) involved in the incident/vehicle stop will be notified that the digital recording is being released or viewed by the public (BWC digital recordings viewed in court or as part of a public hearing are excluded).
3. Supervisors and the Chain of Command may review any BWC digital recording as part of quality control management, use of force evaluation, to answer citizen inquiries about an incident, to critique a recorded incident with personnel, as part of an administrative investigation or use a BWC digital recording as a training tool for roll call/in-service/specialized training. Supervisors will record in the notes section the reason the video was reviewed (see example below).
4. Officers may review videos prior to completing reports or statement of charges. Each time an officers accesses a video in Evidence.com the officer will note the reason in the notes section (see example below).

#### **DESCRIPTION**

(no description entered)

#### **NOTES**

No notes have been posted yet

Viewed for training and to use as example in GO

POST NOTE

5. Officer's will not review videos after an Officer involved shooting or a known in custody death until after making an initial statement ([GO 720,"Deadly Force Guidelines and Investigations,"](#) Section .60 D). The primary purpose of this is to protect the officer from influence on his original perceptions that lead to his decision process in using deadly force. This also enhances transparency in the investigation in the eyes of the public. The officer will be allowed to review the video before making a detailed written statement.

#### **.50 RETENTION AND STORAGE BWC DIGITAL RECORDINGS:**

1. Once uploaded BWC recordings are stored on Evidence.com for a period of ninety days prior

to automatic deletion unless tagged and categorized for evidence or administrative retention. Videos assigned a retention category will be retained until according to the schedule below.

Retention Category	Retention Time
Evidence	Indefinitely until manually deleted.
Officer Injury	Indefinitely until manually deleted.
Pending Review	Indefinitely until manually deleted.
Potential Complaint	Indefinitely until manually deleted.
Training	Indefinitely until manually deleted.
Traffic Stops	Indefinitely until manually deleted.
Use of Force	Indefinitely until manually deleted.

2. Videos maintained for evidence will be retained per guidelines in [G.O. 833, "Evidence and Property Control,"](#) and Records [SOP-085, "Property/Evidence Disposal Guidelines."](#)
3. Administrative videos will be maintained per the guidelines of PSD or training.

#### **.55 ENHANCED BWC FEATURES**

1. The AXON Body 3 camera comes equipped with enhanced features including live streaming, location services, gunshot detection, and AXON signal. The agency has chosen to disable all of the above services with the exception of location services.
2. The use of location services are intended for officer safety purposes in the event the agency loses contact with an officer when they are away from their vehicle or other AVL location services are lost.
3. Location services are active when a user is recording video. Once a user stops recording video location services are no longer active. The last known location during the recorded video will be visible on the AWARE application or Evidence.com AWARE page.
4. Supervisors will be trained in the use of location services and have available the ability to use Evidence.com or the AWARE application for officer safety concerns.
5. The TSD Commander has the ability to modify enhanced features upon request and approval of the Chief of police in special operations situations. All users will be notified prior to any changes of features outlined in this order.

#### **.60 EVIDENCE.COM USE AND ACCESS**

1. Evidence.com can only be accessed by officers who have been authorized by and been issued login credentials from the Technology and Services Division;
2. Officers will only be able to access their own video recordings;
3. Investigative group members will have access to all non-restricted videos;
4. Commanders and supervisors will have permissions to view all video recordings;
5. Evidence.com maintains an audit trail of access, sharing and editing of video; and,
6. Maintains original unedited video.



**.66 DEMONSTRATION OF BWC:**

With the approval of the on-duty supervisor, personnel may "stage" an event and demonstrate BWC to interested parties. If an event is "staged" for demonstration purposes, personnel shall indicate on the recording the fact that the incident is being staged for demonstration purposes.

**.70 PUBLIC RELEASE**

This policy will be available for public release and will be shared and reviewed at Neighborhood Advisor Council meetings and other community forums when implemented and when significant changes are made.

